

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	USSR (Moscow Oblast)	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Shortage of Food and Consumer Goods in the Moscow Area	DATE DISTR.	14 February 1955
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- During summer 1954, [ ] the inhabitants in various towns 80 to 100 km from Moscow were rather depressed by the adverse economic conditions. The queues which formed in front of the bakeries were indicative of the shortage of bread, and near panic set in whenever bread became scarce in the local bakeries. Such shortages led to the widespread buying and hoarding of bread, and this only aggravated the situation. [ ]  
[ ] Velikiye Luki (N 56-20, E 30-32), that similar conditions existed in that area and that the local population there sometimes had to stand in bread lines for more than six hours. 25X1
  - Numerous rumors concerning the cause of the bread shortage were current among the inhabitants. One of the rumors attributed the shortage to a very severe drought in several areas [ ] of the Soviet Union. Another rumor claimed that the increased military preparations and the stockpiling of grain by the government were the cause of the shortage. This last rumor was particularly current at the time of the Soviet announcement that US aircraft had violated the Soviet border in the Far East. Other rumors of a local nature blamed the shortage of bread on the poor organization of the bakeries in the towns [ ]  
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  - Bread was not the only food item in short supply, but its scarcity was the most dramatic of the shortages. Although fresh meat was available, there were practically no meat products such as canned meat, sausages, and ham. The supply of fats, including butter, was only occasionally available. Potatoes and other vegetables were comparatively easy to obtain. [ ]  
[ ] 25X1
- |                          |                              |      |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|------|
| Butter                   | 30 to 35 rubles per kilogram | 25X1 |
| Fresh meat (average cut) | 16 to 20 rubles per kilogram |      |
| Milk                     | 2 to 2.50 rubles per liter   |      |
| Eggs                     | 1.10 rubles each             |      |

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4. [ ] the prices on consumer goods were still very high. All textiles were always in short supply, and cloth of better quality was either unavailable or prohibitively priced for the average income. While these shortages of consumer goods existed in the small towns and rural centers in the Moscow area, practically anything could be purchased in the city of Moscow. Even in Moscow, however, lines could be seen during the morning in front of government department stores; most of the people in these lines were waiting to purchase cheap textiles and other consumer goods. 25X1
5. Although the local inhabitants were rather dispirited because of the various shortages, there was no evidence of serious unrest or any pronounced or open criticism of the agricultural policies of the Soviet Government. [ ] [ ] the people were far from satisfied with the promises of the Soviet authorities to increase the supply of food and consumer goods. 25X1
6. [ ] the population seemed to fear a new war and reacted with panic to any rumors of war. 25X1

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